Maryland's High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Application Project Listing

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Background Information

Since the announcement of the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR) under ARRA, Maryland has been diligently working with neighboring states, Amtrak, Norfolk Southern, and where necessary, CSX to identify the optimal projects that would bring the most benefit from funding under the HSIPR. Along with Amtrak, Maryland identified six projects on the Northeast Corridor and two additional projects that would help the region/corridor move forward in realizing the Obama Administration's vision for high speed intercity passenger rail services. These projects were developed through collaboration and agreement with the neighboring states and corridor states from DC to Maine with each state submitting projects that would enhance the NEC or other high speed rail services. For the corridor to be optimized, these projects are critical and the states agreed to support each others' projects understanding that each project is a key component of realizing the corridor's potential.

For the applications due on August 24th, the application categories are all Track 1 A and 1 B. Track 1 A is for projects that can be completed in roughly a two year time frame and have the bulk of their planning, engineering and NEPA complete. Track B projects would utilize the HSIPR funding to complete the Planning/Engineering and NEPA work that would get critical projects to the point that they are ready for construction. For Maryland's projects, many of the most critical projects such as BWI Station, B&P Tunnels, the NEC Bridges, Wedge Yard and Chesapeake Connector are proposed as they are regionally significant, part of the Amtrak Master Plan or critical to the MARC Growth and Investment Plan and or freight operations as well. We are seeking approximately $800 M in funding with some projects receiving cost share where possible.

The following list the projects and their details.

BWI Phase I (platform, station and track work) TRACK 1 B

- This grant will construct a new station building and a platform on the middle track at BWI Rail Station.
- The BWI Rail Station has the 4 highest ridership on MARC and the 15th highest on Amtrak. The building is almost 30 years old and has inadequate waiting, ticketing and concession areas. There are three tracks at the station but only two have platforms. Since almost all MARC trains and two-thirds of Amtrak trains stop the middle track represents greatly underused capacity. Both these problems will be addressed in phase 1.
- BWI Rail Station is a significant intermodal gateway to Maryland. A new building will replace the present dilapidated and inadequate building.
- The cost of the work is $ 50M.

BWI Phase II: 4th Track Preliminary Engineering and NEPA TRACK 1B

- This project will do the engineering and environmental work for a fourth track between West Baltimore and Odenton, 9 miles.
- MARC's Growth and Investment Plan includes a tripling of trains by 2035. At the same time Amtrak predicts a 44% increase in trains. In order to handle this increased traffic the railroad must have a fourth track between Halethorpe and New Carrolton. The fourth track in phase 2 will represent the first 9 miles of this 25 mile distance.
- The cost of the work is $ 5.4M.

Baltimore Passenger Rail Tunnel Replacement (PE and NEPA) TRACK 1B

- The Band P tunnels are located under the City of Baltimore just south of Penn Station.
- The tunnels were constructed in 1873 and have slow speeds, sharp curves and restrictive clearances for passenger cars (MARC can not use standard two level cars because of the tunnels). While the track bed of the tunnels was replaced in the 1970's at some point in the near future it will need to be replaced again which will cause major delays to Amtrak and MARC trains.
- A new tunnel will correct the clearance problem and allow a 3 minute time savings for passenger trains.
- DOT is conducting a study of alternative locations for new passenger and freight tunnels but before any construction can proceed, environmental study and preliminary engineering is required. The cost of the work is $ 60 M.

Construct Storage (Wedge) Yard in Washington TRACK 1A

- MARC has had long term plans to construct a 6 car storage yard located adjacent to New York Avenue. The yard was planned to have 6 tracks and a support building. Due to many delays to the project the cost has increased so that funds are available only for three tracks and a trailer. This grant would allow completion of the full 6 tracks and facilities.
- By 2035 capacity on MARC will triple. MARC already exceeds the storage capacity of Washington Union Station. Until the new yard is constructed there is no additional space at Washington to store additional MARC equipment. The yard will handle 46 additional pieces of equipment. In addition Amtrak will use the yard at night and on weekends when MARC trains are elsewhere.
- The grant request is for $ 31 million dollars to contribute to $45 M for $76M total to complete construction of the entire yard.

Chesapeake Connector (PE/NEPA) TRACK 1B

- The Chesapeake Connector (formerly referred to as Northeast Corridor 3rd Track, or Track "A") has been identified in several studies, including the 2002 Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study (MAROpS), as a bottleneck and safety concern for both freight and passenger rail services operating on the line owned by Amtrak.
- There are several benefits to the creation of a third track along this 6.3 mile section between Prince (Perryville, Md.) and Bacon (Northeast, Md.). These benefits include reduction of significant freight and passenger rail delays, safety and track maintenance concerns, improved freight operations to the Delmarva Peninsula and the Port of Baltimore, and inaccessibility issues to intercity passenger rail services and freight movement in the northeast corridor.
- The Chesapeake Connector conceivably opens the window of freight operations from the existing eight-hour window between 10 PM and 6 AM daily to 24-hour accessibility. The addition of the third track should lead to economic development potential in the corridor. This freight enhancement will have the added benefit of cost-sharing between freight (Norfolk Southern) and passenger services.
- The Chesapeake Connector will provide added safety to Amtrak operations in this area from Perryville, MD to Newark, DE. It also opens up the possibility for better ACELA times. The Chesapeake Connector will allow for future MARC or SEPTA service that would fill a gap for intercity commuter rail service between Newark, De and Aberdeen, Md., now part of the MARC Growth and Investment Plan and AMTRAK Master Plan.

Northern Maryland Capacity and Trip Time Improvement Program (NEC Bridges) TRACK 1B

- The Gunpowder, Bush and Susquehanna River bridges are located north of Baltimore on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor.
- They are only two tracks while most of the railroad north of Baltimore is three or more tracks. Despite being 100 years old or more trains operate across them at speeds of 90-125mph. Both MARC's Growth and Investment plan and Amtrak's Master plan include replacing these bridges for state of good repair and capacity reasons (the bridges would be 3 or 4 tracks). Both BRAC and MARC's proposed maintenance facility at Edgewood will substantially increase the number of trains using these bridges.

- Cost: We are requesting $ (TBD by Amtrak/15% of total project funding) for preliminary engineering and environmental studies. These are a prerequisite for requesting funds for future construction.

Brunswick Capacity Upgrades TRACK 1A

- This project upgrades the signal system on CSX between Washington and Brunswick. It constructs three new crossovers to allow trains to change tracks every 5 miles and replaces the obsolete electronics at 5 such existing locations.
- Over 50 CSX, Amtrak and MARC trains use this line each day. Both MARC and CSX predict additional trains in the next decade. While there are two tracks, a slow or broken down train can cause major delays. This project constructs additional crossovers which gives the dispatcher greater ability to route trains around delays. In addition the existing signal system can cause delays during periods of bad weather. Trains must operate at only 15mph when the signal system is out of service. The new electronic systems will reduce the number of such occasions.
  The estimated cost of the project is $ 23 million dollars and the grant request is $18.3 M.

Positive Train Control Equipment TRACK 1A

- This grant request is for funds to equip all MARC locomotives and cab cars to operate positive train control systems on Amtrak and CSX. The system will provide an increased safety margin by reducing the chance of human error.
- By 2015 both Amtrak and CSX must install positive train control systems which will enforce speed limits, signal indications and protect workers along the track. Amtrak already has an approved system north of New York which will be extended south to Washington. CSX will adopt a different system to achieve the same requirement. All MARC locomotives and cab cars must be equipped with both sets of equipment.
- The grant request is for $ 10 M.